

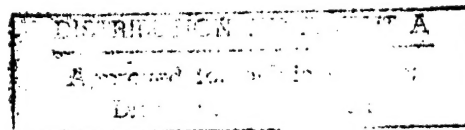


MENTORING IN AMC:
WHERE ARE WE AND WHERE SHOULD WE GO?

Graduate Research Project

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GRADUATE RESEARCH PAPER

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Abstract

Leader development is essential to the long-term success of any organization, especially a military organization. Volumes of research promote the crucial need for leadership development and offer numerous different ways to accomplish this goal. Leadership development involves teaching critical skills needed to accomplish the mission and transmitting the core values and traditions of the organization to successive generations. The research shows that one effective way to accomplish this goal is through mentoring. This paper examines mentoring as one method of leadership development and includes a discussion of the benefits and barriers to mentoring. It also discusses mentoring in the context of current leader development initiatives in Air Mobility Command (AMC), both formal and informal. Recommendations for enhancing and encouraging mentoring as a means to develop future Air Mobility leaders are provided.

MENTORING IN AMC:
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I. Introduction

The literature on leadership describes a variety of approaches towards leadership development. One approach to leadership development is mentoring. Mentoring is a leadership development process where a senior person in an organization invest time and the benefit of experience into the professional and personal development of a junior individual who shows potential for leadership. General William Creech, Air Force innovator and leader, during his 1989 lecture to the Air War College said, “the first duty of any leader is to create more leaders” (Kitfield, 1995:333). Decades of research make it clear that new leaders cannot be developed overnight. Effective leadership requires a combination of technical knowledge, interpersonal skills, knowledge of the organizational traditions and approaches toward problem solving, plus the ability to communicate the organization’s vision. Many of these qualities can only be developed through experience in different situations over time. Air Mobility Command (AMC) provides potential leaders with a variety of training and career broadening experiences that are designed to enhance participants leadership skills, knowledge and abilities. These opportunities focus mostly on broadening the officer’s technical skills and organizational knowledge. These initiatives include formal leadership development programs such as Phoenix REACH, Phoenix HAWK and Advanced Study of Air Mobility (ASAM). Phoenix REACH is the aircraft cross training initiative where

selected officers are assigned to fly different types of mobility aircraft. This program is designed to develop mobility leaders well skilled in a broad range of airlift aircraft operations. Phoenix HAWK is a two-year program. The first year junior officers are assigned to work in the Tanker Airlift Control Center (TACC). The second year these officers are assigned to work in various directorates on the AMC headquarters staff. This program exposes junior officers, early in their career, to the entire air mobility global operation. The ASAM program is a thirteen-month graduate studies program through the Air Force Institute of Technology (AFIT). Graduates from this program receive a "Masters of Air Mobility." In addition to these formal programs, AMC sends all of their junior officers to Squadron Officers School for professional military education and all of their newly-selected squadron commanders to Squadron Commander Pre-command Training. These programs provide skills training and valuable experiences but they are not as well suited for providing officers with a deeper understanding of the organization's traditions, core values and approach toward problem solving. One approach toward preparing officers in these areas is mentoring. Mentoring is a leadership development process in which a senior person in an organization invests time and the benefit of experience into the professional and personal development of a junior individual who shows potential for leadership.

Mentoring offers significant benefits for the military. Researchers have concluded that mentoring relationships are widely recognized as important career resources in organizations (Ragins and Scandura, 1994:957). General Ronald Fogleman, former Air Force Chief of Staff, described the importance of mentoring as follows:

First, I see mentoring as a fundamental responsibility of all. No matter whether you're at base level, in an operating agency, or on a headquarters staff. We all

bear the responsibility to develop our subordinates and to help groom the next generation of Air Force leaders. Mentoring is a process that is good for all of us. With the help of all interested parties, we can capitalize on mentoring to help ensure that the Air Force remains a great team. (Fogleman, 1995:4)

For mentors, the benefits of mentoring include job satisfaction and fulfillment, improved job performance, increased stature in the organization and a loyal base of support from protégés (Kram, 1984; Zey, 1984). For protégés, increased job satisfaction, increased visibility to higher levels and better career advancement in the organization are some of the benefits to being mentored (Dreher and Ash, 1990). For organizations, these benefits include higher productivity, adoption of the organizational values, higher worker loyalty and increased longevity for workers (Kram, 1984).

Researchers have also identified several barriers to mentoring in large organizations. These barriers include high mentor-to-protégé ratios, low informal mentor-to-protégé contact, mentor time constraints, reluctance by protégés to initiate contact with potential mentors and general misconceptions about mentoring (Kram, 1984; Zey, 1984).

This paper has four objectives. First, this paper will discuss mentoring as a specific method of leader development. Second, this paper will compare and contrast mentoring with the leadership development programs mentioned above. Third, this paper will discuss some of the barriers to mentoring in AMC. Fourth, and finally, this paper will make recommendations to AMC for implementing a mentoring initiative.

II. Overview of Mentoring

Definition of Mentoring

Mentoring is not a new concept as a means of one-on-one leader development. During biblical times, Moses, the leader of the nation of Israel, mentored Joshua and prepared him to assume leadership of the nation. Ancient Greek history describes the close relationship between the philosopher Socrates and his pupil Plato. A great modern day Army leader, General George C. Marshall, attributes much of his success to the close mentoring relationship he had with General Pershing. Further, General and later President Eisenhower credits his success to Marshall's mentoring.

The word mentor originates from Homer's *Odyssey*, in which Mentor is the trusted friend of Odysseus left in charge of the household during Odysseus's absence. According to the story Athena, disguised as Mentor, guided Odysseus's son Telemachus in his search for his father. Through this one-on-one relationship, Telemachus learns the skills and gains the knowledge needed to lead. Since then the word mentor has taken on the definition of "a wise and trusted counselor or teacher" (American Heritage Dictionary, 1996). Traditionally, a mentor is an older person of experience teaching a younger person lacking experience. Major James O. Patterson, in his Armor magazine article "Defining Mentorship," asserts that mentoring is:

A service performed in an atmosphere of mutual trust, professional respect, and comradeship in which selected senior soldiers share experiences, knowledge and challenges with selected junior soldiers, with the goal of improving the Army through increased individual maturity, higher and deeper levels of knowledge, and the full achievement of potential. (Patterson, 1985:37)

Patterson identifies five primary roles the mentor performs: friend, leader, teacher, counselor, and trusted person. Patterson's roles focus on the interpersonal relationship between the mentor and protégé. Certainly, the above definition would apply not only to soldiers but airmen as well.

The official Air Force publication on mentoring defines "mentor" in a similar way. Air Force Instruction 36-3401, *Air Force Mentoring*, defines a mentor as a "trusted counselor or guide." It describes mentoring as "a relationship in which a person with greater experience and wisdom guides another person to develop both personally and professionally" (AFI 36-3401, July 1997:1). The AFI's assertion that mentoring should occur on two levels, professional and personal, is consistent with research.

Kram (1984) defined mentoring using the same two primary areas. She viewed mentoring as a one-on-one relationship in which a mentor performs certain functions in the life of the protégé. She divided the mentoring functions into two subgroups: career and psychosocial. Career functions enhance career development and advancement, while psychosocial functions "enhance the sense of competence, identity, and effectiveness in a professional role" (Kram, 1985:23). It is important to emphasize that the mentor has selected the protégé based on the belief that the protégé will perform well in whatever new responsibilities the relationship brings. The protégé must perform well with the opportunities afforded by the mentor for the relationship to be successful. Table 1 lists the mentoring functions that fall in each category.

Table 1. Mentoring Functions

<u>Career Functions</u>	<u>Psychosocial Functions</u>
Sponsorship	Role Modeling
Exposure and Visibility	Acceptance and Confirmation
Coaching	Counseling
Protection	Friendship
Challenging Assignments	

These functions are carried out in the context of a personal relationship between the mentor and the protégé. *Sponsorship* is the initiation of the relationship where the mentor agrees to be involved with the protégé to a greater degree than the normal course of events would necessitate. This includes informal contact in addition to the formal or official contact that would normally occur between the mentor and protégé.

Exposure and visibility are functions that place the protégé in the view of other senior level members and increase opportunities for promotion. It also places senior level members in the view of the protégé.

The protégé benefits from the *coaching* function by gaining insight into the organization's internal workings, values and goals and exposure to the mentor's perspective on various issues. *Coaching* is especially important in leadership development. It gives the protégé a higher level perspective and helps instill the organization's approach to problem solving in the protégé. The ability to understand the organization this way and act appropriately is critical.

The mentor can help the protégé to develop risk-taking skills by offering *protection* from failure to some extent. Finally, the last career function mentors are expected to perform is to funnel the protégé into *challenging assignments* that enhance the protégé's abilities and value to the organization. These assignments both broaden the

protégé's perspective of the organization and prepare him or her for senior level positions. This function allows the protégé to:

Develop specific competencies and to experience a sense of accomplishment in a professional role; . . . it is critical in preparing the (protégé) to perform well on difficult tasks so that (the protégé) can move forward. Without (challenging assignments), a junior person remains unprepared for positions of greater responsibility and authority. (Kram, 1985:31-32)

Thus far, the mentor functions have focussed on providing critical skills and organizational core values needed for career development of the protégé. Even greater impact occurs when the mentor develops the protégé in the psychosocial area.

Psychosocial mentoring involves the development of the protégé's self-image, confidence, values, attitudes and identity. This type of mentoring provides an avenue for senior leaders to transmit the values and traditions of the organization to the next generation of leaders. Psychosocial mentoring includes *role modeling, acceptance-and-confirmation, counseling and friendship*.

Role-modeling is the demonstration by the mentor of the attitudes, values and beliefs of the organization which are worthy of emulation by the protégé (Wilson 1989:7). As the relationship develops and the protégé observes the mentor in various situations, these values become evident. Overtime, the protégé learns to emulate those values and attitudes seen in the mentor and may adapt these values as their own.

Both individuals derive a sense of benefit of self from the positive regard conveyed by the other. As the (protégé) develops confidence. . . , the (mentor's) acceptance-and-confirmation provides support and encouragement. In later years, a (protégé's) acceptance-and-confirmation provides support for the wisdom and experience offered the next generation. (Kram, 1985:35)

Through *acceptance-and-confirmation*, the protégé develops confidence in his or her abilities to make decisions and lead the organization.

Counseling provides the protégé with an avenue to safely express fear or anxieties about performance, goals, professional or personal development. The mentor provides a “listening ear” and a “guiding hand” to help the protégé.

Kram (1985) posits that *friendship* is perhaps the most elusive function, given the differences in age and organizational positions between mentor and protégé. Wilson (1990) offers that *friendship* can amplify the other functions and help the participants better accept the differences between them. Wilson emphasizes that the purpose of the psychosocial mentoring is to develop the protégé in his or her own professional and personal way, not to create a younger clone of the mentor. Kram adds that any mentoring relationship can be characterized by the following four attributes.

Table 2. Attributes of Mentoring Relationships

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1 | The protégé can freely discuss personal and professional dilemmas as the mentor provides the opportunities for gaining knowledge, skills and competence. |
| 2 | The relationship occurs in an organizational context that greatly influences when and how it unfolds. |
| 3 | This kind of relationship is not readily available to most of the people in the organizations. |
| 4 | Both participants gain from the relationship (Kram, 1985:1-2). |

The four characteristics focus on the one-on-one, personal nature of the relationships.

Lassiter and Rehm (1990), in their study “Should the Air Force Establish a Formalized Mentoring Program?” provided a concise, yet comprehensive definition of mentoring:

Mentoring involves teaching, coaching, counseling, protecting, motivating, sponsoring, facilitating, assisting, advising, and serving as a role model for the junior member. Mentoring is a one-to-one informal relationship within or outside organizational/supervisory chain wherein the seasoned member assists in ways that only a mentor could. (Lassiter and Rehm, 1990:5)

Horner added that for the military, "it [mentoring] means someone who is at least two ranks senior. Normally, mentors are successful and upwardly mobile, enjoying high rank or position in the organization (Horner, 1996:76).

Thus far, mentoring has been defined as a voluntary, informal, one-on-one relationship between a wise and trusted guide and counselor at least two grades senior (mentor), who performs certain functions (listed in Table 1) that assist in the professional and personal development of another individual (protégé). With this definition in mind, the next section will examine research focussed on the benefits of mentoring.

Benefits of Mentoring

Research indicates that there are measurable benefits from mentoring. These benefits are the positive effects received from mentoring by the mentor, the protégé and the organization.

Mentor

Studies attribute positive benefits to the mentor. Dreher and Ash offered that "mentoring relationships are likely to lead to positive consequences for the mentor as well as the protégé. Being a mentor can make a senior manager's job more manageable" (Dreher and Ash, 1990:544). Zey found that mentors benefit from mentoring in four

main areas: career enhancement, increased intelligence and information, advisory role and psychic reward (Zey, 1984:78).

As the relationship with the protégé develops, trust and confidence increases between the mentor and the protégé. This trust and confidence enables the mentor to delegate more and free up time for other activities. Additionally, if the protégé performs well, the mentor's reputation in the organization gains stature. Over time, mentors may develop relationships with multiple protégé who become loyal to the goals of the mentor in the organization. All of these factors work to make the mentor more effective and enhance career success. Protégés benefit mentors by keeping them in touch with lower levels of the organization. Senior managers often have to work hard at obtaining feedback and open lines of communication up and down the chain (Zey, 1984:85). A protégé can function as a communication conduit between the mentor and lower levels. With protégés throughout an organization, mentors have loyal and trusted sources of information. These lines of communication increase the mentor's effectiveness.

As a trusted advisor, a protégé can be extremely beneficial to a mentor. The protégé can serve as sort of an "alter ego" or "sounding board" for ideas and plans the mentor is considering. Additionally a protégé can give a mentor feedback on certain issues that others in the organization would not (Zey, 1984:88). The protégé can provide an informal testing mechanism of new ideas in the organization. Through the protégé, the mentor can "field test" ideas informally on selected smaller sections of an organization without formally implementing the idea. This enables the mentor to judge the feasibility of an idea and avoid the risk of implementing a bad idea or plan that would be detrimental to the entire organization.

Finally, there are certain intrinsic benefits accrued to a mentor. Zey reports that mentors often have a sense of pride when a protégé does well and experience personal satisfaction in teaching a protégé. Also, mentors have an increased sense of making a lasting contribution to the organization (Zey, 1984:88).

In summary, a mentor receives benefits from the mentoring. Successful mentors experience increased career success and enhancement because protégés increase the mentor's ability to get work done, help to maintain open line of communications and act as a trusted advisor. In addition, mentors experience increased personal satisfaction and sense of contribution to the organization.

Protégé

In a comparative study of 320 business school graduates (147 men and 173 women), Dreher and Ash found several positive factors associated with mentoring practices. Although this study investigated the specific impact of mentoring outcomes on men and women, several general positive factors were identified that applied to both groups. The study found that:

Individuals experiencing extensive mentoring relationships reported receiving more promotions, had higher incomes, and were more satisfied with their pay and benefits than individuals experiencing less extensive mentoring relationships. (Dreher and Ash, 1990:539)

This study shows that those who are in or have been in mentoring relationships are receiving tangible, measurable benefits. Dreher and Ash reasoned that there are two primary processes that "explain why mentoring relationships with senior managers may be beneficial to the career success of the protégé." The first of these two processes is a

special form of entry into important social networks that the mentor provides for the protégé. Dreher and Ash further explain this network:

These networks are generally thought of as repositories for valuable information that is often unavailable through formal communication. The capacity to build alliances and coalitions also depends on inclusion in informal networks, as do the opportunity to be visible to upper level decision-makers. Having the opportunity to display talent and competence to senior management and to acquire important information through informal networks is likely to enhance career success. (Dreher and Ash, 1990:540)

Through entry into these networks, the protégé gets exposure, not only to the information associated with the higher levels, but also, learns to interpret the behaviors senior managers display and learns some of the unwritten rules of conduct associated with upper level management.

The second process involves “modeling and vicarious reinforcement” where the protégé observes the successful behaviors of the mentor and emulates these behaviors, which in turn, could contribute to career success. When mentors are modeling the values and attitude of the organization, the exposure to a successful mentor for a period of time “rubbed off” on the protégé and the organizational values and attitudes may be transferred. A benefit to the protégé is learning the “rules of the game” for interacting at the senior levels. These rules may not directly impact the protégé in his or her present position, but will be needed when the protégé advances to higher levels in the organization.

From an AMC perspective these networks exist at all levels – squadron, group, wing and headquarters. Exposure to and influence by the senior leaders at these levels are beneficial to the protégé. This exposure to the senior officers through informal, one-

on-one relationships provides an effective means of transferring the command's core values to the next generation of leaders.

Whitely, Dougherty and Dreher (1991) studied the relationship of career mentoring to the promotions and compensation received by 404 early career managers and professionals. They hypothesized that "with other variables controlled, mentoring is related to measures of the early career progress of managers and professionals" (Whitely, Dougherty and Dreher, 1991:336). The results of their study supported earlier findings of Dreher and Ash that mentoring was related positively to both promotion rates and total compensation. They found that highly mentored individuals received more promotions and higher total compensation.

An Air Force study supports the conclusion that mentoring contributes to promotions. Uecker (1984) also found that mentored individuals had higher incidence of early promotion. He surveyed 210 Air Force officers at Air Command and Staff College and 160 Air Force officers at Air War College to gather data on mentoring. Uecker's study revealed that mentored officers showed a "significantly greater likelihood of promotion ahead of their contemporaries. As a matter of fact, 80% of the mentored officers at Air War College had at least one early promotion, whereas their unmentored counterparts were promoted BPZ (Below-the-Zone) at a reduced rate of 67%" (Uecker, 1984:41). Although the mentoring relationship is not an early promotion program, results like these are consistent with the expectation that it would help improve performance, and prepare a protégé to perform better at higher levels than a non-protégé.

Turban and Dougherty studied the role protégé personality plays in the likelihood of acquiring a mentor and the affects on career success of having a mentor. They

predicted that those individuals who received higher levels of mentoring would have more positive perceived career success as well as actual career success. Their results showed that those who are mentored perform better and are rewarded with higher rates of promotion and increased compensation, which in turn increase perceived career success and job satisfaction (Turban and Dougherty, 1994:699).

Zey interviewed 150 executive in both Fortune 500 companies and smaller firms to determine the affects of mentoring on career success and job satisfaction. The following table is a comparison of the mentored and unmentored groups he studied.

Table 3. Comparison of Mentored versus Unmentored Groups

<u>Category</u>	<u>Mentored</u>	<u>Unmentored</u>
Position of Manager	More likely to have an authority position (vice president, department head) and to be closer to position of centralized control	Few vice presidents, lack of control over personnel, budget, resources.
Awareness of organization	High recognition of requirements for the road to the top	Mystified about promotion method, rationale behind advancement.
Optimism	High. Based on firm belief that mentor will succeed and will at the same time elevate protégé.	Generally lowered career expectations
Knowledge of organization	Rich comprehension of organizational structure, environment dynamics, personalities involved	Lower awareness of operation of informal organization, of what affects execution of organizational role.
Commitment to Organization	Through mentor feels closer to product and organizational goals. More apt to perceive present organization as career site.	Lack of connectedness to organizational culture. High turnover.
Job Satisfaction	Mentor enriches protégé's work/organization experience. Quicker positive response to quality work makes job more enjoyable.	Low profile leads to a nonreturn on good performance, leading to decreased satisfaction.
Career Planning	Clear objectives a product of frequent interchanges on career goals	No career road map, low comprehension of how to get from here to there. Goals of low specificity.

Zey concludes (Table 3) that those who have been mentored experience higher levels of job satisfaction and optimism towards the future than those who have not (Zey, 1984:71).

In summary, studies have shown that individuals who have had mentoring experiences have higher promotion rates, higher pay and compensation rates, higher job satisfaction than their unmentored contemporaries. In addition, protégés are much more likely to incorporate the values and attitudes of the mentors than are non-mentored counterparts. The next section will consider the organizational benefits to mentoring.

Organization

Zey reports that “mentoring exists not only because it serves the interest of the mentor and protégé but because it simultaneously fulfills the needs of the organization” (Zey, 1984:93). Among the benefits to the organization, mentoring helps integrate individuals into the organization, reduce turnover and increase longevity, provide for development of new leaders and increase organizational productivity. This section will examine each of these benefits.

Integration into the organization is critical to the sense of belonging that members feel. The more individuals feel apart of the organization and feel a “sense of community” in their work place, the better they identify with the goals of the organization. The mentoring process can aid in integrating the protégé into the organization and create a greater sense of belonging and closeness with the organization (Zey, 1984:95). Kram agrees with this conclusion and adds that mentoring can “reduce the shock of entry for the newcomer and facilitate preparation for advancement” (Kram, 1985:159). A lack of sense of belonging has been linked to turnover. Zey links higher levels of mentoring with lower levels of turnover. Dreher and Ash found higher levels of job satisfaction among those highly mentored individuals, which results in greater longevity in the organization.

The final two benefits of successful mentoring are leader development and increased organizational productivity. Mentoring facilitates the transfer of critical skills and knowledge about the organization from one generation to the next to keep the organization viable and productive. Moreover, mentoring provides a mechanism for the organization to transfer important values and attitudes to the future leaders. Finally, several studies have demonstrated that both mentors and protégés are more productive (Dreher and Ash, 1990; Ragins and Scandura, 1994; and Turban and Dougherty, 1994), which clearly makes the organization more productive.

III. AMC Leader Development and Mentoring

Introduction

AMC has several formal and informal programs designed to develop leaders. These programs include Phoenix REACH, Phoenix HAWK, and Advanced Studies of Air Mobility (ASAM). The formal programs are designed to “create a larger pool of competitive mobility officers through leadership development” (Directorate of Personnel, 1998). In order to accomplish this goal, AMC provides opportunities to a select group of junior officers to crosstrain into other weapons systems, to be assigned to the headquarters early in their career or to pursue an advanced degree in Air Mobility. These programs provide an excellent opportunity for junior officers to learn new skills and gain valuable experiences, but they are not mentoring programs.

Phoenix REACH

Phoenix REACH is the command initiative to crossflow rated captains and majors from airlift to tanker aircraft and tanker to airlift aircraft for the purpose of creating a pool of highly experienced mobility officers for the command’s future leadership (Directorate of Personnel, 1998). The intent of the program is to increase the breadth of experience among rated mobility officers by giving them exposure to multiple weapon systems and the various roles and missions of these weapons systems within the AMC global mobility system. Selected officers are identified and tracked by the command for follow-on assignments to key Joint, OSD, and Air Staff positions to “help foster their growth and development as future Air Force senior leaders” (Directorate of Personnel, 1998).

Phoenix REACH participants, once selected, move to another operational base and remain there for approximately three years. The goal of this program is to provide an increased level of experience and understanding of AMC's global mobility operation. Each crossflow participant masters the skills of flying more than one type of mobility aircraft.

Phoenix HAWK

Phoenix HAWK is AMC's intern program. Patterned after the Air Force Intern Program (AFIP), the Phoenix HAWK program selects highly qualified captains and assigns them to the headquarters staff. After two years, the command sends them back to the field one year prior to their below-the-zone eligibility for major. Phoenix HAWK is designed to "build the records" of junior officers by giving staff experience prior to promotion opportunity to major and develop and grow mobility leaders through exposure to the Tanker Airlift Control Center (TACC) and headquarters staff. The goal is to produce more mobility leaders who are competitive for promotion below-the-zone. Further, in order to broaden the Phoenix HAWK officers, follow-on flying assignments will be to a different mobility aircraft. Finally, the Phoenix HAWK program is designed to educate senior raters with an awareness of the program and the value of the program's participants to their wing and to have them include a statement in the performance report highlighting the program (Directorate of Personnel, 1998).

Concerning leader development, clearly the intent of the program is to provide highly qualified individuals with exposure and visibility to the headquarters early in their career to get the "big picture" of the command. Additionally, because of the command's effort to highlight the program to wing commanders, participants get exposure to senior

levels of the command. Undoubtedly, these experiences provide increased skill and valuable knowledge important to the development of leaders. The HAWK program has some of the characteristics of mentoring. HAWKS receive *exposure and visibility* at the headquarters to senior officers. The HAWKS receive *challenging assignments* that are career enhancing. However, the program is not designed to provide the one-on-one, long-term, informal relationship with a senior leader where the psychosocial aspects of mentoring: *role modeling, acceptance and confirmation, counseling and friendship* could be developed.

The HAWKS participate in luncheons and other informal gatherings with senior officers where the expressed purpose is to discuss leadership and get personal exposure to the perspectives of senior officers (Welser, 1998). These gatherings have some of the characteristics of mentoring. They are voluntary and informal. These meetings provide participants with some exposure to senior leaders, but only in short duration. This informal contact could result in the initiation of a mentoring relationship.

Advanced Studies of Air Mobility (ASAM)

The Advanced Study of Air Mobility program is designed to provide a select group of air mobility officers with an in-depth education in air mobility operations and an introduction to the Defense Transportation System (DTS). The 13-month course of study has three distinct parts: an accredited Air Force Institute of Technology (AFIT) Masters of Air Mobility degree, completion of the Air Mobility Warfare Center (AMWC) core courses, and site visits to Department of Defense, allied, and industrial entities with applications to global transportation. Students are board-selected by AMC senior leaders based upon their record of accomplishments, academic skills and leadership potential.

The goal of ASAM is to cultivate a core of mobility experts to lead AMC in the future (AMWC Website, 1998). Like the two previous programs, ASAM provides increased knowledge and understanding of air mobility operations. ASAM students, like the Phoenix HAWKs, have the opportunity to participate in informal meetings with the senior leadership at the Air Mobility Warfare Center for the expressed purpose of gaining the senior leader's perspective. These meetings focus on a broad range of topics from issues concerning the command to leadership to professional responsibilities and expectations of senior leaders. These informal interactions enable the senior leaders to express attitudes and values important to the organization. The ASAM program has some of the characteristics of mentoring, as well. ASAM students receive *exposure and visibility* to a wide range of senior leaders. The program is designed to place graduates in *challenging assignments* on the joint or air staff. The AMWC Commander *coaches* the ASAM students on a broad range of issues and decisions. However, like the Phoenix HAWK program, the ASAM program is not designed to provide the long-term, informal, one-on-one relationship with a senior leader that provides the psychosocial aspect of mentoring development.

Summary

AMC's formal programs are designed to develop future air mobility leaders. These programs provide critical skills, increased knowledge and valuable experiences needed for effective leader development. These programs are valuable, effective and career enhancing. However, these programs provide different benefits than the benefits of mentoring programs. The formal design of these programs makes the informal, one-on-one relationship that is central to mentoring difficult to achieve. In addition, these

programs probably do an excellent job of providing participants with critical skills and experiences but are not well suited for providing the tailored personal development advice, and counseling and assignments that are important elements in mentoring. Mentoring cannot occur without an ongoing one-on-one relationship.

Informal Initiatives

AMC has two other informal initiatives which are designed to provide participants with some of the benefits of mentoring. These initiatives are informal in nature, but they are too short in duration to provide mentoring. In most of the research defining mentoring, the word informal is used frequently. Informal is defined as “not being in accord with prescribed regulations or forms; unofficial”(American Heritage Dictionary). In the context of mentoring, informal is used to describe the type of relationship between the mentor and the protégé. That is, the relationship was entered into outside of the formal structure of the organization and is not regulated or controlled by the organization. The organization may encourage the existence of such relationships but cannot dictate the conditions of the relationship. While mentoring, according to the researchers, can be promoted through the use of informal activities which bring protégés and mentors together, participation in these activities does not guarantee that mentoring will occur.

Shadow programs

A shadow program provides an opportunity for a junior officer to “shadow” or follow a senior leader for a short time to observe his or her daily activities. The length of a shadow program varies depending on the senior leader, but usually it lasts from one to

five days. Shadow programs expose junior officers to the rigors of senior leadership and enable them to get a close view of the requirements and demands placed on senior leaders. Also, shadow programs offer the senior leader an opportunity to influence junior officers and communicate his or her perspective on issues pertinent to his or her position. The limitation of the shadow program is the short duration. Mentoring cannot occur in five days. Shadow programs may contain some *exposure and visibility* common to a mentoring relationship and limited *coaching* may occur in the short time, but these are fully developed mentoring initiatives. However, one very positive aspect of shadow programs is the contact between potential protégés and mentors. The shadow program could provide the informal contact between potential protégés and mentors needed to establish a mentoring relationship.

Commander Luncheons

Another informal method of encouraging mentoring is through regularly scheduled commander luncheons. At these luncheons, commanders spend time with junior officers discussing issues pertinent to command. Because of the informal nature of these meetings, topics range widely from leadership development to issue discussion. For instance, General Sams, AMC Vice-commander, holds these luncheons monthly for company grade and field grade officers. The intent of these luncheons is to provide a forum for two-way communication between the AMC senior staff and the company and field grade ranks. Further, the luncheons provide an opportunity for junior officers to observe and learn the perspective of a senior officer (Sams, 1998). Again, though these luncheons are beneficial, because of the short duration, the full benefits of mentoring would be difficult to realize. Like the shadow program, *exposure and visibility* and

coaching may occur during a commander's luncheon, but the limited duration and lack of long-term relationship the other aspects of mentoring are not present. However, as with the shadow programs, a commander's luncheon could provide the perfect environment for potential protégés and mentors to meet.

Summary

The current leadership development initiatives in AMC provide excellent opportunities for selected junior officers to develop leadership skills. The formal programs provide critical skills training and valuable experience needed to lead. These programs provide some of the career functions of mentoring: *exposure and visibility*, *coaching* and *challenging assignments*. However, the psychosocial functions of *role modeling*, *acceptance and confirmation*, *counseling*, and *friendship* are difficult to provide through these programs because they are not designed to develop informal, long-term, one-on-one relationships with senior leaders. The informal programs provide exposure and interaction with senior officers for junior officers, but the short duration does not allow enough time for the full benefits of mentoring to be realized. Through these interactions, a mentoring relationship could begin. The next chapter examines the barriers to mentoring that must be overcome before the mentors, the protégés and the organization can reap the benefits of mentoring.

IV. Barriers to Mentoring

A number of activities can prevent the mentoring processes from occurring. Specific barriers can be attributed to mentors, protégés and the organization as a whole.

Mentor

One of the barriers is “the clear cost is the time and energy involved in developing and nurturing the mentoring relationship” (Ragins and Scandura, 1994:658). Time demands on mentors can prevent them from making themselves available to mentor. This may be because, as Ragins and Scandura note, “mentoring is not considered part of the mentoring individual’s job in most organizations, and the time demands are in addition to the mentor’s normal job requirements” (Ragins and Scandura, 1994:658). Another barrier for a mentor may be the potential for the protégé not meeting expectations resulting in a negative impact on the mentor. Kram (1985) notes that a poorly performing protégé may cast a negative shadow on the mentor’s judgement and competency. Subsequently, mentors could be perceived as simply playing favorites, which Myers and Humphreys (1985) contend affects the mentor’s reputation in the organization . Such circumstances can lead to less effectiveness and productivity on the part of the mentor. The next section will discuss the barriers of mentoring for the protégé.

Protégé

Protégés demonstrate reluctance to initiate a relationship with potential senior members. Kram speculates that:

While relationships with superiors are essential for developmental opportunities like sponsorship, coaching and visibility, they are frequently viewed by individuals at lower levels as inaccessible, uncomfortably evaluative, or to be approached with caution. The unequal distribution of power in the hierarchical structure interferes with the formation of supportive relationships by creating the belief that initiating relationships with higher levels is in violation of organizational norms. (Kram, 1985:16)

Not wanting to transgress organizational norms, protégés may forgo the risk of initiating a mentoring relationship. For those protégés willing to risk initiating a relationship, informal access to potential mentors is limited. Protégés may only have access to mentors in formal situations, which do not lend themselves to the development of informal mentoring relationships. Availability of and contact with potential mentors is critical for the formation of informal mentoring relationships, which Kram describes as the most effective type. Another barrier to mentoring for a potential protégé is strained interpersonal relationships with others in the workplace. The mentoring relationship runs the risk of being perceived as a “we/they” situation (Zey, 1984:139). If the protégé’s peers perceive this as the situation, it can become difficult for the protégé to function effectively. The next section will focus on barriers to mentoring for the organization.

Organization

Misconceptions about mentoring are a major barrier. The perception that mentoring is simply another word for the “good ole boy” network and has more to do with who you know rather than how you perform must be overcome in order to achieve any mentoring success. Unquestionably, mentoring does involve an element of who you know, but successful mentoring can only last where the requisite performance exists. However, Uecker’s research of unmentored Air Force officers revealed the feeling that mentoring was simply a method of “ticket punching” for protégés concerned only with

their own careers (Uecker, 1984:53). Zey maintains that “when mentoring is perceived as favoritism, the effect on the organization’s social climate can be disastrous and . . . could destroy the cohesion of a department” (Zey, 1984:159). The perception of mentoring as nothing more than cronyism must be overcome for mentoring to be successful in the organization.

Another barrier to mentoring in an organization, according to Kram (1984), is the culture of the organization itself. Kram describes organization that hampers mentoring:

The culture that most severely discourages mentoring activities is the one that is so short-term results-oriented that attention to employee development and relationships is considered a distraction from important work. Leaders model a results orientation, inquire only about the bottom line, and invest little time in talking with members about their jobs or personal dilemmas. In addition, rites and rituals center around organizational efficiency, high production, and maximum use of technical resources, without concern for the quality of worklife or the development of human resources. Activity and results are valued, not people and development. (Kram, 1984:165)

Kram elaborates on the consequences of shortsightedness for the organization:

Thus individuals feel discounted, the quality of communication and the level of trust are low and supportive relationships become nonexistent. While this context is extreme, many organizations with high turnover and poor performance or morale approximate this kind of culture. Here, mentoring is almost entirely absent. (Kram, 1984:165)

The culture of an organization can impact people’s behavior by defining the values and attitudes which are valued. Those organizations which value results over people and discount the needs of people do not have environments conducive to mentoring. If people feel valued they are more likely to invest time into the organization and those activities the organization values (Kram, 1984). In order for an organization to foster mentoring and gain the support of people for mentoring, the organization must demonstrate caring for people. Kram (1984) describes an organization that encourages

mentoring as one where the leaders are providing the mentoring functions and are rewarding their subordinates on their efforts to develop their subordinates.

Summary

Barriers to mentoring affect the entire organization. Whether it's reluctant protégés or busy mentors or misconceptions about mentoring, these barriers and others must be overcome if the organization is to realize the benefits of mentoring.

V. Conclusion

This paper has defined mentoring as a voluntary, informal, long-term, one-on-one relationship between a senior officer and a junior officer in which the senior officer performs important developmental functions in the professional and personal life of the junior officer. Mentoring requires that senior officer is at least two grades above the junior officer, the relationship is voluntary, informal and one-on-one, the relationship is long-term, and it is focused on the protégé's career and personal development.

The benefits of the mentoring relationship apply to the mentor, the protégé and to the organization. The mentor experiences greater career enhancement, increased job satisfaction and the sense of making a lasting contribution to the organization (Zey, 1984:88). The protégé experiences higher incidence of early promotion, higher job satisfaction and a greater comprehension of the requirements of senior leadership. The organization benefits from the positive experiences of the protégés and mentors. These positive experiences result in reduced turnover and greater longevity with the organization and increased job satisfaction and productivity among mentors and protégés. In addition, the organization continues the development of critical skills needed for the organization to function and the transfer of important values and traditions to the next generations of leaders. In order to realize the benefits of mentoring, the barriers must be overcome.

These barriers include the time-constraints placed upon mentors and the tendency to consider mentoring as an additional duty rather than a priority (Ragins and Scandura, 1994). Protégés may be reluctant to initiate contact with mentors because of the rank

structure and limited opportunity for informal access. The organization has to overcome misconceptions about mentoring such as the perception that mentoring is simply favoritism (Zey, 1984). Further, Kram (1984) offers that an organization that is shortsighted and results oriented to the exclusion of the development of the members hampers mentoring.

AMC has three formal programs designed to develop leaders: Phoenix REACH, Phoenix HAWK and ASAM. These programs are effective, valuable, and career enhancing for the participants; however, they are not mentoring programs. By design these programs cannot provide a one-on-one, informal relationship with a mentor. The two informal programs examined – shadow programs and commander luncheons – provide excellent opportunities for potential mentors and protégés to meet and interact. The result of these interactions could be the development of mentoring relationships. The last section of this paper will offer recommendations to mentors, protégés, and to AMC on how to increase mentoring in the command.

VI. Recommendations for AMC

The three leadership development programs in AMC are valuable for teaching critical skills and providing experience to the command's top performers. However, these programs are not mentoring programs. These programs are formal; mentoring is informal. Interaction with senior leaders in these programs is usually in the group setting; mentoring requires the one-on-one, long-term relationship between the mentor and the protégé. These programs focus on developing operational skills; whereas, mentoring relationships provide the protégés not only, with the critical skills, but also, goes several steps further into personal development.

AMC has a vested interest in making sure the next generation of leaders are prepared to lead and have embraced the value and traditions of the command. Mentoring can help accomplish this goal. To state the command's view on mentoring, AMC should develop a supplement to AFI 36-3401, *Air Force Mentoring*. This supplement should define and explain mentoring and provide supplemental guides to present the command's view of mentoring. Several other major commands (Air Combat Command and Air Education and Training Command) have supplements, which could be used as reference.

Once the command develops the supplement, command-wide data collection is the next step. Only through interviewing junior and senior officers about mentoring can the command determine what steps to take next. This study should focus on the perceptions and attitudes about mentoring in the junior and senior officer ranks. For junior officers, the study should zero in on perceptions of mentoring and its importance to

leadership development. For senior officers, the study should analyze to what extent mentoring occurs and what changes need to be made to establish a more conducive mentoring environment.

Based on the results of the study, the command should develop awareness and education training programs. Two separate programs should be developed -- one for junior officers and one for senior officers. The junior officer's program should educate individuals about the importance of relationships with senior colleagues (Kram, 1984:169), provide awareness of the benefits of mentoring and steps to take to find a mentor. This program could be implemented at the squadron level by the squadron commander. This would serve the dual purpose of ensuring the squadron commander's involvement in the mentoring program, plus early on in the junior officer's career, mentoring would be learned. The more junior officers that are mentored, the more likely the supply of mentors will increase with time. Through this program, junior officers should be encouraged to participate in the informal programs mentioned earlier.

The senior officer's program should focus on the how to's of mentoring, the benefits of mentoring for both junior and senior officers, and the importance of mentoring to the overall leadership development strategy of the command. The senior officer program is especially important because Ragins and Scandura (1994) found that senior leaders do not see mentoring as part of their primary duty. Also, because of time constraints, senior leaders admit to being too busy to focus on mentoring (Kram 1984). One benefit to be emphasized in this program is that senior leaders who consistently mentor are more productive and effective and find their jobs more manageable than those leaders who do not mentor (Dreher and Ash, 1990). This program should be designed to

help mentors identify protégés, initiate mentoring relationships and effectively develop junior officers. This program could provide in-depth discussion of the roles of a mentor as given by Kram (1985): sponsorship, coaching, counseling, protection, etc. This program could be presented at the Squadron Commander Pre-command Training for squadron commanders or at the AMC/CC Commander's Call for wing commanders. The command should also include mentoring into the official job description of senior leaders and evaluate them, in part, on their mentoring efforts. Without command-wide buy in by the senior leaders, mentoring will not be successful in AMC and the command will not reap the benefits.

The formal programs on leadership development studied – Phoenix HAWK, Phoenix REACH and ASAM provide excellent development in the critical skills and experiences needed to lead. The informal initiatives provide excellent opportunities for potential protégés and mentors to interact. However, fully developed mentoring relationships will ensure that the values and traditions of the command, as well as, the skills and experiences needed to lead are passed on to the next generation. By implementing the above listed recommendations, AMC would be taking the important first steps towards developing these types of relationships.

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Vita

Major Jeff Dunn was born in Birmingham, Alabama on 21 May 1964. He received a Bachelor of Arts degree in English and a commission in the ROTC from Birmingham-Southern College, Birmingham, AL in 1986. He attended undergraduate navigator training in October 1986 at Mather AFB, CA. Following graduation from navigator training in August of 1987, Major Dunn was assigned to 340th Bombardment Squadron, Blytheville AFB, AR as a B-52G Electronic Warfare Officer.

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In May 1997, Major Dunn was assigned to the Air Mobility Warfare Center, Fort Dix, NJ to attend the Advanced Studies in Air Mobility Masters Program. Upon completion of the ASAM program Major Dunn will attend Air Command and Staff College, Maxwell AFB AL. Major Dunn is an instructor pilot and instructor navigator with over 2500 flying hours.

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